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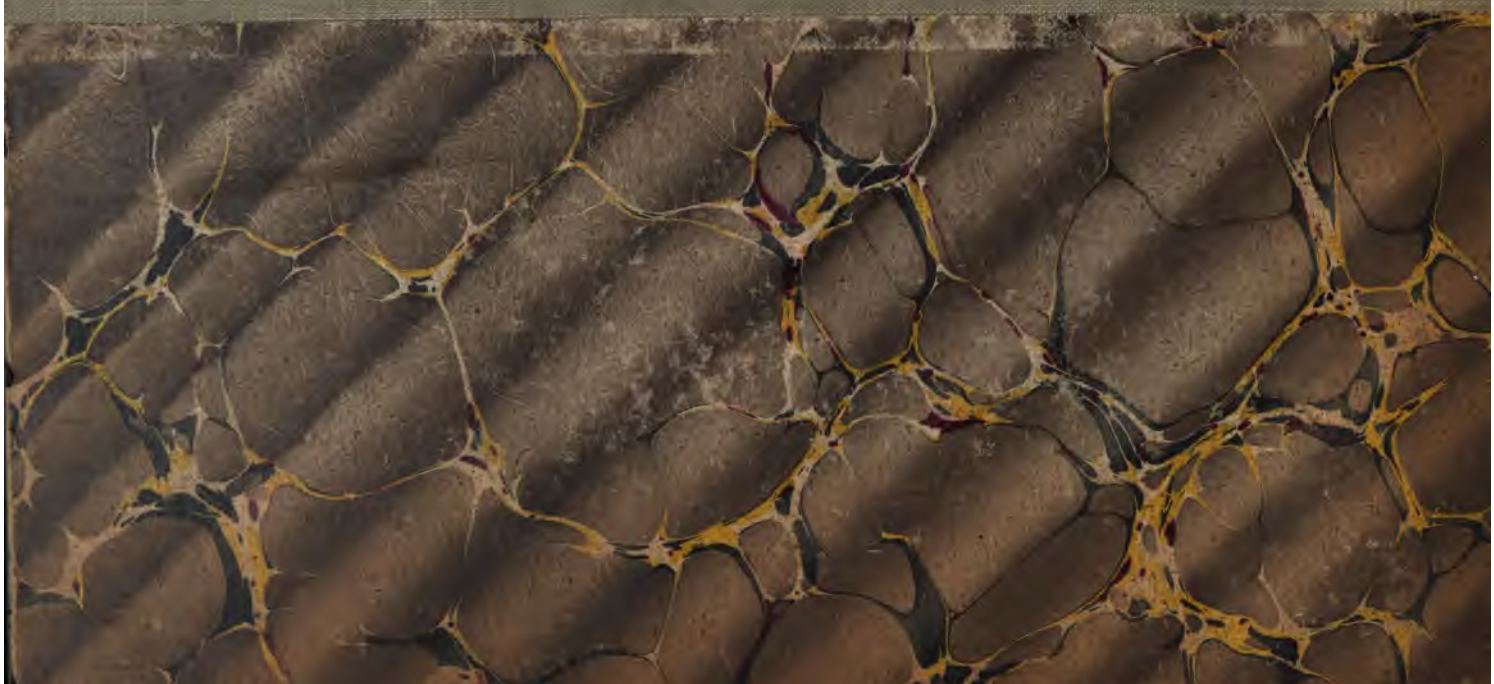

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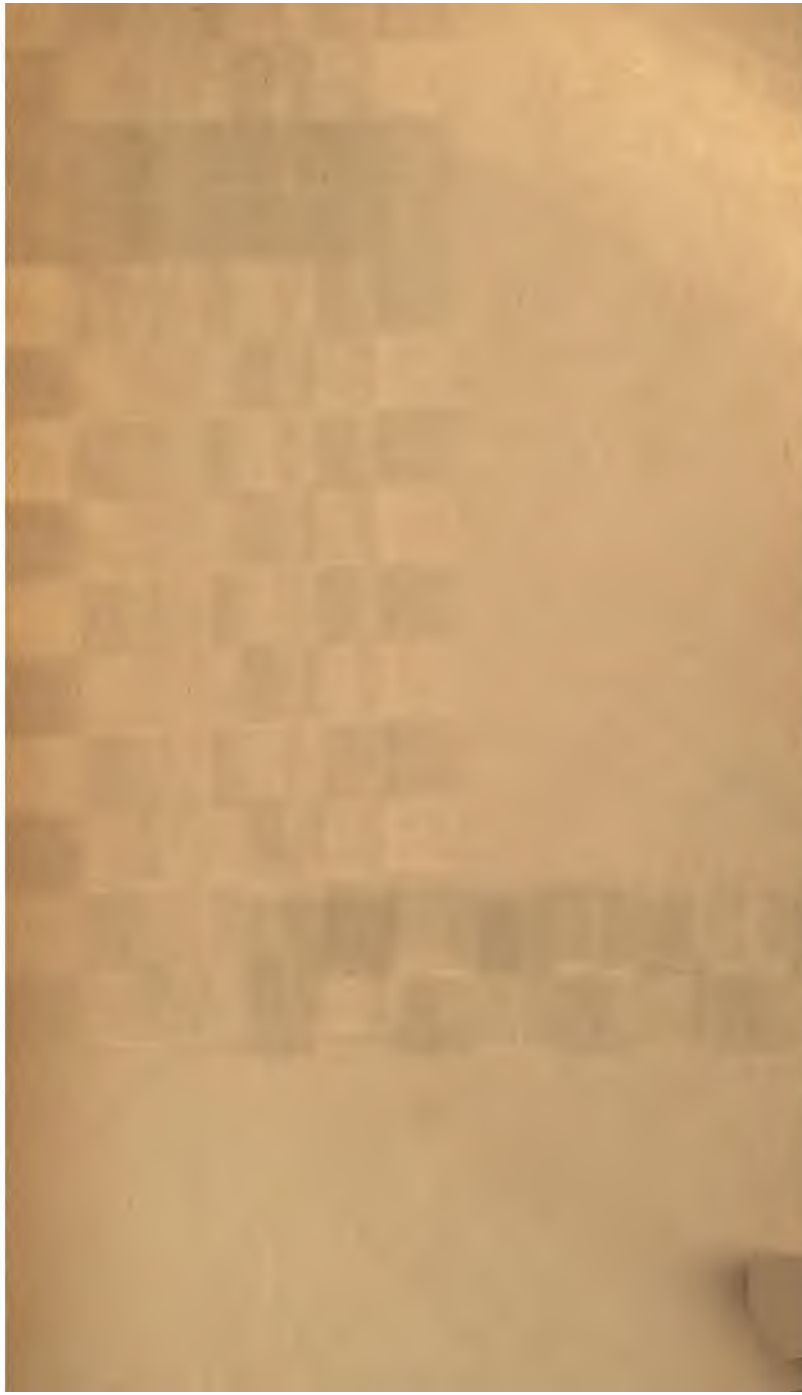

MEMORIAL

OF

SAMUEL MORRIS.

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MEMORIAL

Issued by Frankford Monthly Meeting concerning our late beloved Friend, SAMUEL MORRIS.

WE feel it right at this time to record our sense of the exceptional grace bestowed among us by our Heavenly Head in the life and example of Samuel Morris, and to testify to the loving faithfulness and devotion no less than the cheerful obedience which marked his labors in the service and household of Christ.

He was born in the year 1827. Looking back upon his life, we can early trace the helpful guidance of the only surviving parent, his father, who lovingly devoted himself to the best interests of his children, and entered into their studies and pastimes, their friendships and their aspirations greatly to the profit of heart and mind.

Leaving the city home at the age of six years, he was henceforth associated with Germantown, which in 1833 was still a quiet country village. The meeting at this place was then small, but his father's house was a centre at which paused many traveling Friends, bringing with them a spiritual at-

mosphere which cannot but have influenced his future life. Thus, when he was eleven years of age we find as a guest in the household, a minister, who, taking both father and son into a season of silent waiting upon the Lord, there declared that if he had any true sense of the future he felt convinced that a call to public ministry and a wide field of service lay before Samuel Morris. Such a solemn prospect was never wholly forgotten, although times of departure from so high an aim might intervene. In reference to this period it is recalled that on a Fifthday morning at Germantown, not long before his death, he was watching the school children at their play, and speaking of their future; he recalled how as a boy about twelve years old, in the garden of his father's home, he had been given to see something of the service that he should be called to in years to come. He said, "I saw Europe and I saw Australia," and his words conveyed the deep impression which this vision had made upon him. In later life also so distinct at times were the intimations of the divine will, that, as he declared, he heard as it were almost an audible voice, or felt a hand laid upon his shoulder.

When he was a student at Haverford a period of doubt and darkness intervened in his experience, but the pleadings of eternal

love pursued him still, and this time of gloom fell across his pathway only to be followed by a crisis in his spiritual life, when in great prostration of soul he was enabled to make a full surrender to the Lord of all that he had and was.

In the years following Haverford his taste for a farm life led him to the pursuit of this occupation at the home of John Benington, in Chester County, where he entered fully into the work of the farm,—driving the ox team and handling the axe with his companions in toil. Here also he formed a life-long friendship with his instructor.

Soon after the year 1850 a tract of land was purchased for a new home at Olney, Philadelphia, and here in 1853, after his marriage to our late beloved friend, Lydia Spencer, he settled for the remainder of his life, never wearying of the details of rural employment, but clinging to the variety of outdoor enjoyments, the beauty of the landscape, and the quiet retreat. He was often heard to say, "After the tedious detail of city business, there is no medicine so effectual as working in a garden."

As his life went forward, seeking ever more and more to have his eye single to the Lord, he was qualified by Him for His service, not only as a minister of the Gospel, but

in many weighty affairs of the Church. In the exercise of the discipline, especially, his clear judgment, joined with great Christian tenderness, fitted him in no common degree for its important and oft-times difficult labors. His sympathetic nature prepared him to enter largely into the feelings of others in the varied trials of life, as well as in their religious exercises and conflicts, so that he was oftentimes engaged in privately handing forth a word in season to instruct, strengthen or cheer.

Samuel Morris' gift in the ministry was acknowledged in the year 1864, when about thirty-seven years of age. Of the experiences which led to this important event we appear to have little record. Yet perhaps their fruit may be embodied in an utterance of his in recent years, when to one just beginning to speak in our meetings he gave his counsel to this effect: "Simple obedience is what we are to seek after; just to put aside the arguings and debatings of our own mind, and simply obey the dear Master,—that is all." Thus he expressed the spirit in which a divine prompting to speak, even though it be a gentle one, should be received.

In the year 1876 he was drawn to an extensive visit among the North American Indians. A few years later he visited Canada

and our Southern states, where, finding unsettlement, he counselled unity and an avoidance of separation, maintaining that patient suffering and forbearance were more effectual than isolation.

When he returned once more to the congenial surroundings of home life, we find him in the serene enjoyment of daily blessings; for he had no desire to travel for travel's sake. He was not indeed exempt from trials in these quiet years, some of them very sharp and some of long duration, yet he was enabled through the abiding spirit of patience to rise above these things, and to accept them as of the Divine ordering. And when the affairs of the church again called him to distant service, he could leave home with an assurance that all would be cared for by the same gracious Master who sent him forth.

Thus in the year 1889 the prospect of a visit to Friends in Europe was again forcibly presented to his mind as a duty now to be fulfilled. He found a companion in one who had been called in like manner to this service, our late friend, Thomas P. Cope, who had also accompanied him on previous journeys. We may here remark the great harmony and unity that existed between these two beautiful characters, not only in their long visits in the different countries of Eu-

rope, as formerly in Canada, Virginia, and Maryland also, but always in the more constant concerns of their home, meeting and community.

Only three years after the return from this European trip a similar call drew Samuel Morris once again from home,—this time to visit the colonies of Australia, also Japan and the Sandwich Islands. Once again the loving hand of his Heavenly Father had provided for him a companion, and a true yoke-fellow in the ministry, Jonathan E. Rhoads, who shared with him the burdens of this long and arduous service. Their concern was to go on a mission of love, without criticism of faults, that so they might strengthen whatever of good they might find among any of the name of Friend. This indeed was the keynote of Samuel Morris' ministry. His companion on the long Australian journey bears this testimony to the message and manner of his service. "In our long voyage around the Pacific his sympathetic feelings made his private service and intercourse as valuable as any portion of his ministry. In both public and private he advocated the Gospel of peace, and emphasized to missionaries and others the necessity of co-operation with the Divine Spirit in teaching and preaching the Gospel of Christ. Having proved that Gospel a

message of glad tidings to himself, he would often present it to others in the same loving light. One part of his character which much impressed me was his trustfulness. He seemed literally to take no anxious thought for the morrow. He would allow each new move to bring its own solution of procedure, and from this cause was not easily jostled aside from a direct movement toward the main end in view." In both these extensive journeyings he and his companions made many valued friendships which lasted through life, and developed an interesting correspondence with Friends in France, Norway, Australia, and other lands. The returning minutes expressed a warm appreciation of their service.

Following him back to his home, we may note the many-sidedness of his character as shown under all the varying circumstances of the earthly pilgrimage,—as in the home circle where his deep desire for the welfare of his family, often expressed itself in vocal prayer at the time of Bible reading, or in the wise counsel and interest in the affairs of his servants, which kept them long in his employ,—everywhere the fruits of a gracious spirit made themselves manifest. Finding that the claims of the church occupied nearly all of his time, the greater part of his farm was rented, and he was thus released for other

interests; yet so generous and Christian were the terms made with his farmers, that five of them in succession were enabled to begin life for themselves by the purchase of independent farms. Of like tendency was his service in gathering the savings of employees in factories of the neighborhood, so that large sums of money were accumulated, and many poor men became able to build their own homes. The testimony of his services to the country-side around about him is feelingly presented by a Methodist neighbor, as follows: "The question of who is my neighbor never troubled Samuel Morris. His sympathies were broad enough to take in his fellow men wherever found on God's footstool, but towards those among whom he had been placed to live his long and useful life, he ever showed a sincere and heartfelt interest and a true neighborly concern. Fortunate indeed was the community in which he dwelt for so many years; for he knew his neighbors miles around, in the good old-fashioned way. It was a great privilege to me to have known him for more than fifty years, and I believe I have seen in him the perfect flowering of 'whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure and lovely and of good report.' "

Nor was his earnest philanthropic interest confined to his own neighborhood. His connection with the educational work of our Society was long and close. For forty-one years he acted on the Committee for Westtown Boarding School, and was engaged in much of the detail of its work, especially at the time of the re-building of that institution.

In the peace of the world and in the political prosperity of our own land, he ever took a keen interest, being anxious for the purification of Government and solicitous for the choice of wise leaders. He was frequently sent with others to Washington by our Meeting for Sufferings, and he thus came in contact with each of the Presidents of the United States successively, from President Grant down to Roosevelt. Bearing with them, as they did, messages of peace, good will and benefit to men, he and his companions were always most courteously received.

Nearer at home his heart was grieved to observe the evidences of political corruption on every hand; he longed to see the day come when men would rise and throw off the chains that bound them, and show to the world that they were indeed free men. He expressed his great concern for the outcome of the political struggle that was made in Philadelphia during the last few months of

the year 1905, and hoped once more to exercise the right of franchise, but this hope was never realized, for before that time the Master called him to enjoy his full citizenship in the Heavenly City, whose maker and builder is God.

No memorial of our beloved friend will be complete or true which fails to mention the gracious public ministry committed to him by our Lord and Master,—a ministry which through forty years flowed as a perennial fountain of refreshment and of healing streams amongst us. It was marked, as indeed was his entire religious life, by a complete and humble reliance upon the grace of God made known in the offices of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and through His offering of Himself upon the cross for the redemption of the world. His was a power that lay in simple truth, and in completeness and purity of utterance, rather than in great flights of inspiration. His sermons were marked by clearness of expression, much definiteness of aim, and a presentation of the great truths which came before him, in regularity of order and in a language which, while without rhetorical display, and uttered in a tone not far removed from that of common life, was pervaded by a warmth of concern, a mild and healing sympathy, which at-

tested the divine source, and at once claimed and received the heartfelt attention of his hearers. As he was careful never to prolong his speaking beyond the definite message with which he was charged, this receptive attention was very usually maintained in the hearts of his hearers quite to the end of his communication; and many are those who have thereby found their highest aspirations awakened or renewed, and their spiritual strength promoted. The natural freshness of his gift was shown under remarkable circumstances in an incident recently related. A number of years ago he was traveling in the South by night, when, a bridge having been washed away by flood, the car in which he was sleeping crashed into the chasm. The passengers, being left in total darkness amid wreckage, wounds and death, were giving way to a spirit of panic, when there arose in the mind of Samuel Morris, who had found himself pinned fast among the debris, the words of the prophet Isaiah, and he cried aloud in calm, clear tones to his fellow passengers, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." He then urged upon them self-control, with the assurance that rescue must be close at hand. Thus a habit of dwelling near the Eternal

Refuge ministered strength to the needy in their hour of extreme peril.

Among all the attainments of an impressive life, the most lasting impression to many was that of the personal character of this dear friend. Samuel Morris was eminent as an example of how the grace of God may develop the Christian life, and he thus showed forth the praises of Him who had called him out of darkness into His marvelous light. His quiet cordiality, his unfeigned humility, so well in accord with the precept, "in honor preferring one another;" his simplicity of soul in thought and word and deed,—and yet back of these a reserve of firmness, courage and settled purpose,—all these combined to make a singular effect of poise, moderation, and unobtrusive completeness which are among the rare attainments of character; they are indeed solely to be acquired by the secret might and effectual working of Him whose perfections we are called upon to follow.

His humility was especially noticeable. Deeply conscious of his own inability to sustain his hearers in a Christian life, he would say, "Oh, I see so little result from my ministry;" and on one occasion, being told of newness of life found in a man with whom he had conversed upon best things, he was

moved to tears, and to exclamations of thankfulness that he had at last heard of fruit to his labor. The truth as taught by George Fox was ever before him, I have brought men to Christ and then have left them there.

Referring to what is called "immediate conversion," Samuel Morris acknowledged that in the experience of some this type of change is needed; there were, however, he said, different degrees of awakening, and those who have not greatly violated God's laws are often led gently by Him, and almost insensibly brought beneath His banners, and shown clearly that they are His, after years of increasing love.

In the declining years of life he was blessed by the loving Giver of all good things with an unusual soundness of mind and body. Illness was practically unknown to him; and yet this only led him to greater pity for those who were not so blessed. The disease which finally brought his peaceful life to a close was not thought of as a source of great danger by many of his friends, among whom he moved as usual up to within a day of the end. Simply a gradual weakening as of old age was noticed, and then came the peaceful change, on the 17th day of Tenth Month, 1905.

Having been thus faithfully, patiently and cheerfully engaged in his Master's service in

so many fields while strength was his, as strength declined he could make this acknowledgment in a letter to his sister, about two weeks previous to his death: "Looking back over the past, a quiet soul-satisfying peace is mostly my portion, not because I have done so much, but that my best has been given to the Best of masters, and as such it has been accepted so graciously. What little there may yet be for me to do I know not, but trust that I am patiently waiting and quietly hoping, through all the days of my appointed time, till my change come. We may well accept with daily gratitude and praise the quiet peaceful old age that is made possible for us, that we are still surrounded with kind and loving friends, while creature comforts without number are filling the overflowing cup. May we not therefore exclaim with the Psalmist, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.' "

We, of his own meeting, in solemn thankfulness for such a life, record our sense of his sweet and loving trust, even unto the end, in Him who is the dwelling place of His children in all generations. We remember how blameless were his life and conversation among us, and how faithfully, amid the trials which were laid upon him in his later years, he kept the word of the Redeemer's patience,

and knew himself to be kept thereby. His faith, as years passed over him, and as his mortal life matured and ripened, partook more and more of the simplicity of the gospel. He acknowledged that he came to cling more closely to the essential realities of the Christian faith, and we believe his ministry of the spoken word among us partook more fully of these realities, and deepened in sweetness and strength as he drew near his journey's end. His memory is fragrant, precious, for we rejoice to believe that like Enoch he "walked with God and was not for God took him."

Memorial of Samuel Morris.
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